

# **USSOCOM's Role in Addressing Human Trafficking**

**A Monograph  
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## **Abstract**

USSOCOM's Role in Addressing Human Trafficking by MAJ Phillip B. Brown, U.S. Army, 54 pages.

Human Trafficking is modern slavery. Its size, global scope, and potential to threaten national security warrants appropriate Department of Defense attention. However, the existing U.S. government institutions tasked to respond to Human Trafficking fail to account for the Department of Defense as an effective partner in addressing this global blight.

This monograph asks whether the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) has a role in addressing Human Trafficking. Human Trafficking mimics and compliments other illicit activities that destabilizes regions and creates environmental opportunities for violent extremist organizations. Activities such as illicit arms trafficking and narco-terrorism are known to destabilize regions, and have some causal links to violent extremist organizations. USSOCOM currently addresses those particular illicit activities operationally through the Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs); however, USSOCOM does not appear to address human trafficking. Tasked to synchronize global efforts to counter violent extremist organizations, U.S. Special Operations command is in a unique position to address Human Trafficking, as a compliment to existing U.S. government efforts to counter human trafficking .

Using a most similar systems design methodology, the monograph compares two illicit activities with human trafficking, in order to demonstrate the necessity for USSOCOM attention. This monograph posits that USSOCOM should address human trafficking to augment existing U.S. Government efforts. Specifically, USSOCOM may use a similar operational approach taken to counter narco-terrorism, as well as increased intelligence synchronization with the U.S. Department of State Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center.

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## Introduction

The familiar remedies of food, shelter, schools, and medicine are urgent, but they do not address the root cause of aggressive violence that manifests itself in slavery – indefensible abuse of the vulnerable by the more powerful. Addressing this issue will require a systemic and sustained commitment to effective public justice systems that protect the global poor.

- Gary Haugen, president of the International Justice Mission, June 25, 2003<sup>1</sup>

De Oppresso Liber

– Free the Oppressed, motto of the US Army Special Forces

There is no more oppressed group of people than those living a life of involuntary servitude, the victims of Human Trafficking (HT). Of the blights on human history, the slave trade from the renaissance until the mid-1800s remains one of the most deplorable acts of humans against humans. While many people would be surprised to learn that the magnitude of slavery today rivals that of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, that naïveté cannot prevent purposeful action to address the modern form of the ancient blights. The terminology of HT to describe this modern form of slavery is a recent recognized phenomenon, but its attributes of involuntary servitude and exploitation span the history of mankind. In the past decade, there has been increasing effort from both international organizations and U.S. domestic agencies to address HT. Recent policy documents at both the national level and the Combatant Command (COCOM) level emphasize the importance of HT as a national security issue, and in some areas an increasing trend of destabilizing activity.<sup>2</sup> This paper asks whether the United States Special Operation Command (USSOCOM) should be concerned with HT.

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<sup>1</sup> House Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Human Rights, Gary Haugen, *Statement at the Global Trends in Trafficking and the 'Trafficking in Persons Report*, 108<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., June 25, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> House Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Human Rights, *Global Trends in Trafficking and the 'Trafficking in Persons Report*, 108<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., June 25, 2003. House Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats, and Capabilities, *Tracking and Disrupting Terrorist Financial Networks: A Potential Model for Inter-Agency Success*, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 2009. Senate Armed Services Committee, *Statement of General James L. Jones, USMC, Commander, United States European Command Before the Senate Armed Services Committee*, 109<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess.,

This monograph asserts that USSOCOM should be concerned with HT, because of its correlation with instability and conditions that give rise to Violent Extremist Organization (VEO) existence and operations. The US views HT as a national security threat, and this necessitates US Department of Defense attention.<sup>3</sup> This increasing awareness of HT as a global issue runs parallel and at times intersects with the increasing prevalence of VEOs as a transnational threat.

Already tasked to synchronize the global effort against VEOs, USSOCOM is in a unique position to address this complex amalgamation of VEOs, HT, and regional instability as part of a larger US government strategic framework with operational impacts. There are two dominant theoretical mechanisms in this argument. First, HT is a major destabilizing illicit activity within nations and regions. Second, destabilizing illicit activities create environmental conditions that foment the existence and operations of VEOs. From these mechanisms, there are operational implications for USSOCOM, including information and intelligence synchronization, as well as an expansion of existing counter narco-terrorism missions to include counter-HT missions.

This monograph will present and support the hypothesis in five major sections. First, a review of the existing literature describes the scope and nature of HT, and elucidates the importance and relevance of HT in the current operating environment and as a national security threat. The literature review also highlights opportunities to include USSOCOM into existing US government approaches. The second section begins with a presentation of the research

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2006, 6. U.S. Pacific Command, *USPACOM Strategy*, U.S. Pacific Command, [http://www.pacom.mil/web/pacom\\_resources/pdf/pacom%20strategy%2002APR09.pdf](http://www.pacom.mil/web/pacom_resources/pdf/pacom%20strategy%2002APR09.pdf) (accessed May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010). Senate Armed Services Committee, *Posture Statement of General Douglas M. Fraser, United States Air Force Commander, United States Southern Command*, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., Senate Armed Service Committee, 6,8,10. Senate Armed Services Committee, *Posture Statement of General William E. Ward, USA Commander, United States Africa Command*, U.S. Africa Command, <http://www.africom.mil/getArticle.asp?art=4133&lang=0> (Accessed May 12, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center (HSTC) Charter and Amendments*, U.S. Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/m/ds/hstcenter/41444.htm> (Accessed March 16, 2010). U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Human Trafficking: A Strategic Framework Could Help Enhance the Interagency Collaboration Needed to Effectively Combat Trafficking Crimes*, (Washington, DC, 2007). U.S. Department of State, *2010 Trafficking In Persons Report* (Washington, DC, 2010).

methodology. In order to support the hypothesis, it is useful to compare similar components of illicit activities that share characteristics with HT, and then contrast the difference of approaches that appear to offer a different result. This methodology builds on Landman's discussion of Most Similar Systems Design, which focuses on comparing similarities in order to highlight the one or two primary differences.<sup>4</sup> The following three sections compare narco-terrorism, arms trafficking, and human trafficking.

The final section focuses on the implications of the analysis and the specific actions that USSOCOM should pursue to increase the US effectiveness to address this destabilizing activity. First, due to USSOCOM's role as the US government-synchronizing element to counter VEOs, it possesses the ability to provide the US Department of State with increased intelligence and information sharing of HT activities within specific nations and regions. In addition, similar to existing operations to build partner-nation capacity to counter narco-terrorism, USSOCOM, through the Theater Special Operations Commands, should build specific nations' security capacity to address HT within its borders. Over the last decade, the scope of special operations overseas has expanded to include Counter-Narco-Terrorism (CNT) missions, which have a dual purpose of organizational unit training and increasing the partner nation capacity to engage and defeat narco-terrorism within its borders. Counter-HT may use a similar operational approach to provide operational decision makers information and intelligence on the relation between HT and terrorist networks, contributing to a US Government strategic framework for counter-HT and promote regional stability.

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<sup>4</sup> Todd Landman, *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics: An introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 70-71.



## Nature of Human Trafficking (HT)

This section seeks to present HT both as a destabilizing activity and a potential national security threat in order to support the fundamental reason for the Department of Defense (DoD) and further, USSOCOM involvement in existing counter-HT efforts.

Human Trafficking, or modern slavery as currently described, is an increasingly discussed subject in both national policy and international human rights debates. The nature of HT, evidenced in its definition, indicates its relation to common individual human rights issues (life, liberty, pursuit of happiness) by denying individuals a fundamental right to control their life. In order to demonstrate why HT is important enough to warrant increased attention from the Department of Defense, and USSOCOM in particular, it is worth describing the nature of HT, as it exists today. First, HT will be described in size and scope, and then as a potential national security threat. There is a theoretical mechanism asserting that the collection of destabilizing illicit activities foments both areas and opportunities for VEOs to exist and operate. Over the last ten years, there is an increasing prevalence of scholarly literature related to HT, with some focused specifically on the nexus between HT and terrorist organizations, or VEOs.<sup>5</sup>

### Size and Scope of HT

Recent studies over the past couple of years highlight both the increased visibility of HT as a transnational illicit activity and the actual increase of HT.<sup>6</sup> According to the Department of State's most recent Trafficking in Persons Report from June 2010, there are an estimated 12.3

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<sup>5</sup> Colleen M. Traugher, "Terror-Crime Nexus? Terrorism and Arms, Drug, and Human Trafficking in Georgia" (master's thesis, the Fletcher School at Tufts University, 2007); U.S. Department of State, *2010 Trafficking In Persons Report* (Washington, DC, 2010); United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, UNODC (Vienna, Austria, 2009); House Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Human Rights, Gary Haugen, *Statement at the Global Trends in Trafficking and the 'Trafficking in Persons Report'*; Tamara Makarenko, "Bodysnatchers" *Jane's Policy Review Community*, January 25, 2008.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*; U.S. Department of State, *2010 Trafficking In Persons Report* (Washington, DC, 2010).

million adults and children in forced labor, bonded labor, and forced prostitution around the world. However, despite those alarming numbers, 62 countries have yet to convict a trafficker under laws in compliance with the Palermo Protocol.<sup>7</sup> There are 104 countries without laws, policies, or regulations to prevent victims' deportation.<sup>8</sup> These numbers indicate both the size of global HT, but also the apparent lack of mechanisms to enforce laws and assist victims.

In addition to the sheer size and scope in terms of victims, there is also a huge profit generated from HT. General profit estimations of HT within local, regional and global markets are \$7 billion annually.<sup>9</sup> This profit generally ties to organized crime, although some authors feel that it may serve as an illicit income source for terrorists or VEOs.<sup>10</sup> The massive profits generated from HT, as well as its potential as a profit generator provide clear opportunities for VEOs wishing to expand their operational funding stream.

Despite the prevalence of HT throughout the world, there is a lag between awareness and actual prosecution of those responsible for HT. For example, despite over 12 million people suffering as victims of HT, there are only 4,166 known successful prosecutions of Human Traffickers throughout the world. As the 2010 TIP states, "As long as there are only around 4,000 trafficking convictions worldwide each year, a message is sent that the injustice suffered by victims is not a national or international priority."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> United Nations, *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Protocol)*, Palermo, Italy, 2000.

<sup>8</sup> US Department of State, *2010 Trafficking In Persons Report* (Washington, DC, 2010):7.

<sup>9</sup> Sharon Anne Melzer, "International Trafficking of Men, Women, and Children," in *Organized Crime: From Trafficking to Terrorism*. ed. Frank G. Shanty, vol.1.(Denver, CO: ABC/CLIO, 2008): 207.

<sup>10</sup> House Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Human Rights, Committee on International Relations, *Global Trends in Trafficking and the 'Trafficking in Persons Report*, 108<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess. And Jerry Hansen, "Mobilizing our Forces for a Coordinated Attack on Human Trafficking: U.S. Department of Defense Plans for Combating Trafficking in Persons," US Department of Defense, (lecture, Conference on Human Trafficking, Security Implications, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, March 8, 2005), 1.

<sup>11</sup> US Department of State, *2010 Trafficking In Persons Report* (Washington, DC, 2010):13.

In a 2003 Hearing at the House Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Human Rights witnesses described the size and scope of HT as well as US and foreign efforts to combat trafficking. From their observations, the committee cogently stated, “Human trafficking is a worldwide problem of enormous proportions, with virtually every nation in the world serving as a source, transit, or destination country of trafficked victims.”<sup>12</sup> While their observations of existing (in 2003) efforts to combat trafficking were remarkable, they indicated a distinct mismatch between the scope of the problem and the resources provided to combat trafficking. For example, in 2003, the Department of State highlighted its minimal operating to address and understand HT, where each person was responsible for 63 countries, including administering and coordinating \$20 million in grants.<sup>13</sup> It is clear that the Department of State, while appointed the lead proponent to coordinate counter-HT, did not have enough manpower to properly address the massive global scope of HT. While addressing the shortcomings of other U.S. government agencies and departments is outside the scope of this paper, this monograph will demonstrate opportunities to increase the whole of government response through USSOCOM integration.

HT exhibits the global connectivity of other transnational crimes, but is also particularly evident in specific regions. A recent UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Report describes the global HT flows. Of the 155 countries studied, a majority of the victims moved across international borders, although domestic trafficking also occurred in 32 of 155 countries.<sup>14</sup> International trafficking (across global regions) occurred primarily when a wealthy, industrialized

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<sup>12</sup> House Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Human Rights, Committee on International Relations, *Global Trends in Trafficking and the ‘Trafficking in Persons Report*, 108<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 2003.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, 11.

nation received the trafficked victims.<sup>15</sup> Particularly applicable to this report was the finding that victims from East Asia were detected in nations throughout the globe; African victims were trafficked to Europe and North America; Latin American victims to North America and Europe; Central European, Eastern European, and Central Asian victims to Europe and the Middle East.<sup>16</sup> One of the findings of the UNODC report is that despite its evidence, its data is not able to capture the true scope of global HT primarily due to its reliance on nations to provide their own data.

The US Department of State Trafficking in Persons (TiP) report also evaluates individual nations' attempts to address HT, and provides a Tier rating based on their findings. They define the Tiers as:

Tier 1: Countries whose governments fully comply with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act's (TVPA) minimum standards.

Tier 2: Countries whose governments do not fully comply with the TVPA's minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards.

Tier 2 Watch List (WL): Countries whose governments do not fully comply with the TVPA's minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards, AND:

The absolute number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing;

There is a failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous year; or,

The determination that a country is making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with minimum standards was based on commitments by the country to take additional future steps over the next year

Tier 3: Countries whose governments do not fully comply with the minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so.<sup>17</sup>

When placed geographically on a map, the Tier evaluations provide a source of comparison for HT and instability. Figure one is a geographical representation of the 2010 TiP report country evaluations.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> US Department of State, *2010 Trafficking In Persons Report* (Washington, DC, 2010): 47.

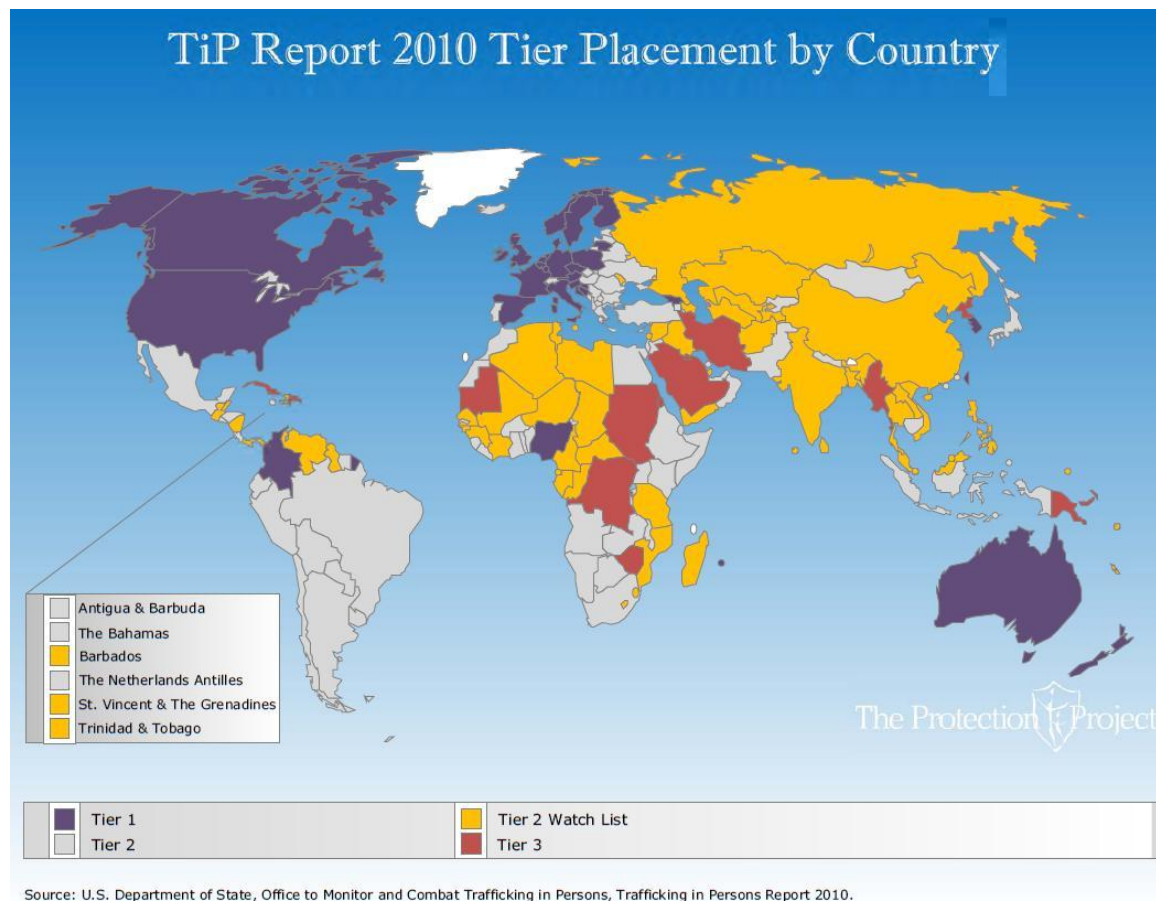


Figure 1: 2010 Tier Placements by Country<sup>18</sup>

Of particular note are the nations assessed as Tier 2 Watch List and Tier 3. The regions of troubling HT activity and poor enforcement are central and Saharan Africa, the Middle East, the Central Asian States, and South East Asia.

Global patterns of HT mimic and overlay existing patterns of VEO operational movement and activity, a pattern that should not go unnoticed by USSOCOM planners. In figure two, the 2010 Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) cited an Economist study that coded nations on their political instability. Their data serves as an interesting and useful juxtaposition of global instability with HT prevalence.

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<sup>18</sup> Johns Hopkins University, "The Protection Project Review of the 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report," Johns Hopkins University, <http://www.protectionproject.org/sites/default/files/TPP%20TIP%20Review%202010%20Compressed.pdf> (Accessed August 10, 2010).

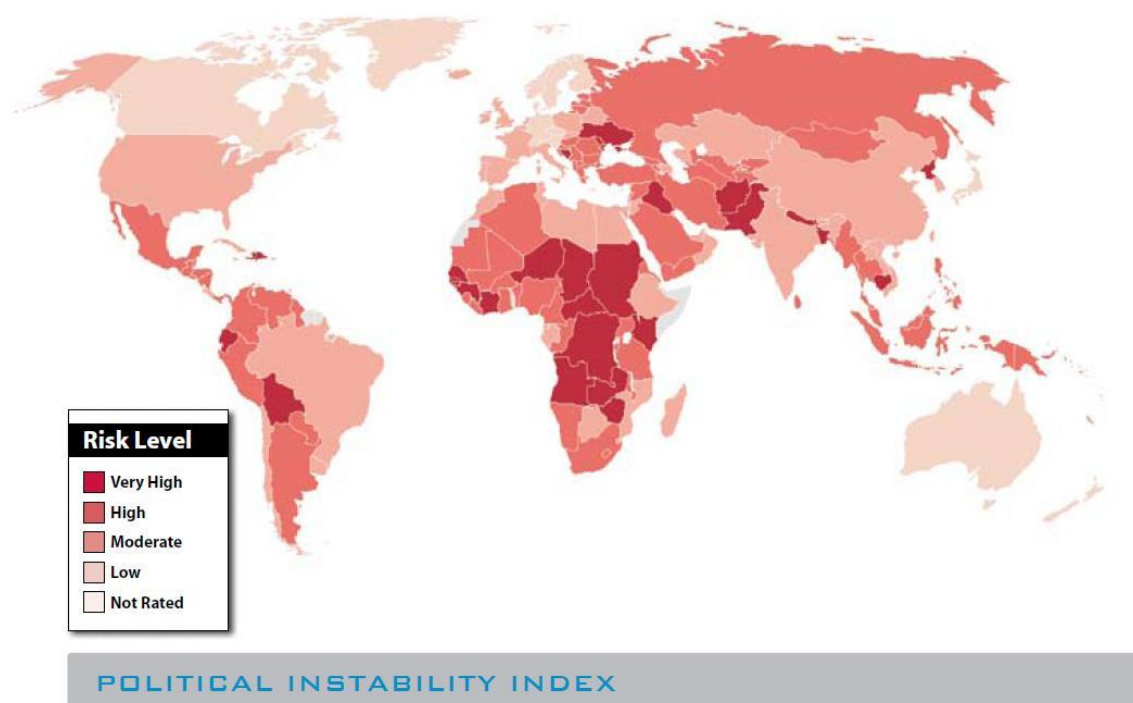


Figure 2: USJFCOM 2010 Political Instability Index <sup>19</sup>

Geographically comparing the 2010 TiP tier evaluations with the 2010 JFCOM political instability index highlight the regions that support the assertion that HT occurs and contributes to instability. Specific regions that share instability and HT activity are Central Africa, the Middle East, the Central Asian States, and individual nations within South East Asia. The geographic comparison also elucidates a potential connection between HT activity and environmental conditions that foment VEO existence and operations.

An interesting but challenging facet of HT is the dearth of empirical research that describes HT in the context of other Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCO), as well as its

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<sup>19</sup> U.S. Joint Forces Command, *The 2010 Joint Operating Environment*, Economic Intelligence Unit, cited in Joint Forces Command, [http://www.jfcom.mil/newslink/storyarchive/2010/JOE\\_2010\\_o.pdf](http://www.jfcom.mil/newslink/storyarchive/2010/JOE_2010_o.pdf) (Accessed August 19, 2010).

global scope. For example, of the estimated number of global trafficking victims by the U.S. Department of State, only 0.4 percent are actually identified.<sup>20</sup>

Human Trafficking is a global scourge that exploits people at the most basic level of humanity: their identity. As demonstrated above, HT is a massive global issue with only a fraction of the international legal and justice apparatuses focused on countering HT. While increasing efforts by nations and US agencies are noble, there remain opportunities to increase the effective counter-HT efforts through emerging operations.

## HT as a National Security Threat

One of the striking facets about HT as it occurs in current policy debates is its potential as a national security threat. Most conversations that describe HT as a national security threat link to specific policy statements or documents, the geographic nexus between HT and other illicit activities, and the nature of VEOs. There are some arguments for HT as a national security threat that generally evolve from the use of HT as a profit generator for VEOs and the potential for VEOs to use HT networks as clandestine methods to move terrorists, equipment, or explosive devices into the United States.<sup>21</sup>

Several policy documents, Congressional Representatives and Senators, and COCOM commanders also see HT as a national security threat. For example, the 2008 US PACOM Strategy specifically lists “transnational and international criminal activity to include narco-trafficking, trafficking in persons, and piracy” as potential challenges that threaten to undermine

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<sup>20</sup> US Department of State, *2010 Trafficking In Persons Report* (Washington, DC, 2010):7.

<sup>21</sup> Representative Bennie G. Thompson, *Chairman of the US House of Representatives Homeland Security Committee Hearing on Human Trafficking: Recent Trends*, on March 19, 2009, to the US House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Border, Maritime, and Global Counterterrorism, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess.; U.S. Department of State, *Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center (HSTC) Charter and Amendments*, U.S. Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/m/ds/hstcenter/41444.htm> (Accessed March 16, 2010).

regional security when describing its operational environment.<sup>22</sup> Despite its prevalence as a national security issue, DoD's external, expeditionary response is unclear. EUCOM, SOUTHCOM, AFRICOM and PACOM include HT as part of their strategic guidance and part of the transnational threats within their regions; however this seems at odds with the apparent lack of focus on integrating DoD under the existing US government national framework established by 2000 Trafficking Victims Protection Act and the National Security Presidential Directive - 22.<sup>23</sup>

In order to more fully convey how HT becomes a national security threat, it is important to understand HT as one component of many illicit activities that destabilize nations and regions, creating an environment ripe for exploitation by VEOs.

HT appears in three recent COCOM posture statements as threats to regional stability and national security.<sup>24</sup> In addition, a recent US House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security hearing described HT as jeopardizing

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<sup>22</sup> U.S. Pacific Command, *USPACOM Strategy*, U.S. Pacific Command, [http://www.pacom.mil/web/pacom\\_resources/pdf/pacom%20strategy%2002APR09.pdf](http://www.pacom.mil/web/pacom_resources/pdf/pacom%20strategy%2002APR09.pdf) (accessed May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010), 4.

<sup>23</sup> Senate Armed Services Committee, *Statement of General James L. Jones, USMC, Commander, United States European Command Before the Senate Armed Services Committee*, 109<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 2006, 6. U.S. Pacific Command, *USPACOM Strategy*, U.S. Pacific Command, [http://www.pacom.mil/web/pacom\\_resources/pdf/pacom%20strategy%2002APR09.pdf](http://www.pacom.mil/web/pacom_resources/pdf/pacom%20strategy%2002APR09.pdf) (accessed May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010). Senate Armed Services Committee, *Posture Statement of General Douglas M. Fraser, United States Air Force Commander, United States Southern Command*, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., Senate Armed Service Committee, 6,8,10. Senate Armed Services Committee, *Posture Statement of General William E. Ward, USA Commander, United States Africa Command*, U.S. Africa Command, <http://www.africom.mil/getArticle.asp?art=4133&lang=0> (Accessed May 12, 2010). *Trafficking Victims and Protection Act of 2000*, Public Law 106-386, 106<sup>th</sup> Cong., (October 28, 2000). President, National Security Presidential Directive-22, "Combating Trafficking in Persons," U.S. Army, <http://www.combat-trafficking.army.mil/documents/policy/NSPD-22.pdf> (Accessed July 15, 2010).

<sup>24</sup> Senate Armed Services Committee, *Statement of General James L. Jones, USMC, Commander, United States European Command Before the Senate Armed Services Committee*, 109<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 2006, 6. U.S. Pacific Command, *USPACOM Strategy*, U.S. Pacific Command, [http://www.pacom.mil/web/pacom\\_resources/pdf/pacom%20strategy%2002APR09.pdf](http://www.pacom.mil/web/pacom_resources/pdf/pacom%20strategy%2002APR09.pdf) (accessed May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010). Senate Armed Services Committee, *Posture Statement of General Douglas M. Fraser, United States Air Force Commander, United States Southern Command*, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., Senate Armed Service Committee, 6,8,10. Senate Armed Services Committee, *Posture Statement of General William E. Ward*,



The welfare of its victims, but it also poses a threat to our homeland security. The same transnational organizations that traffic in people may also traffic narcotics or weapons across our borders. Some of the same routes used to traffic persons into the US may be used to smuggle terrorists or their weapons into the country. Proceeds from trafficking also could be utilized for other illicit activities that threaten our security. Therefore, for both humanitarian and security reasons, it is imperative that we do everything possible to combat trafficking.<sup>25</sup>

While these words are compelling, and support the idea that HT is a national security threat, they are speculative in nature, and not validated by any recent empirical evidence. As stated earlier, the critique for a lack of empirical evidence is endemic to most academic research on HT. Most of the conclusions are logical inferences based on qualitative assessments. There are several ongoing efforts to increase both the data collection and study of HT.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to the 2009 House hearing, HT appears in the 2010 National Security Strategy, under the “Human Rights – Respect for Women and Children” section.<sup>27</sup> The *2010 National Security Strategy* continues a trend of relating human rights and national security issues. While the military serves the national interests of the United States, certain policy issues also contain elements of human rights. Military planners may be hesitant to plan and conduct operations with human rights as the sole source; however, HT contains both human rights and national security interests.

The US Department of State’s Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center (HSTC) serves as the US government hub for counter/anti-HT. In some of its guiding documents, there are clear statements that link HT to national security. Their charter document states, “Migrant smuggling, trafficking in persons and clandestine terrorist travel are transnational issues that threaten national

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USA Commander, *United States Africa Command*, U.S. Africa Command, <http://www.aficom.mil/getArticle.asp?art=4133&lang=0> (Accessed May 12, 2010).

<sup>25</sup> Thompson.

<sup>26</sup> The 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report cites six ongoing research projects that are attempting to gather data on HT. Four of the studies focus on the victims, one is focusing on law enforcement response, and one attempts to track trends in HT.

<sup>27</sup> President, *National Security Strategy 2010*, (Washington, DC, 2010).

security. In addition, these problems often involve facilitation by corrupt foreign officials, thereby eroding democratic institutions.”<sup>28</sup> The issues presented by the HSTC have implications for USSOCOM’s current efforts to serve as the global synchronizer to counter-VEOs. At least one scholar corroborates the HSTC’s view the HT may serve to facilitate clandestine movement of terrorists, who discusses MS-13’s recruitment by al-Qaeda to move AQ members across the US-Mexico border. The author states that MS-13 was recruited due to its extensive knowledge in HT.<sup>29</sup> This relationship between various illicit actors and well-known threats also describes both the geographical and threat nexus that supports a view of HT as a national security threat.

In March 2009, LTG David Fridovich, the Director of the USSOCOM Center for Special Operations gave a statement to the House Armed Services Committee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats, and Capabilities. Of particular interest was LTG Fridovich’s discussion of how finance plays into terrorism, which provides the crucial link for the terrorist to accomplish his mission. LTG Fridovich stated that:

Counterthreat Finance activities include, but are not limited to countering: narcotics trafficking, proliferation activities, weapons of mass destruction funding, *trafficking in persons*, weapons trafficking, precursor chemical smuggling, petty and organized crime, in some cases, very well organized crime.<sup>30</sup>

Due to the classified nature of most of USSOCOM’s operations, it remains a critique of this monograph that USSOCOM may be currently conducting counter-HT operations; however, open source research does not indicate that they are deliberately conducting counter-HT missions. LTG Fridovich later states that “any tracking of money flows in support of the insurgents and terrorists

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<sup>28</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center (HSTC) Charter and Amendments*.

<sup>29</sup> Ron Hanser, Jeffrey P. Rush, Deborah L. Pace, Joel M. Keyes, “International Organized Crime and Its Impact on U.S. National Security” in *Organized Crime: From Trafficking to Terrorism*, Vol. 1, Ed. Frank G. Shanty, (Denver, CO: ABC/CLIO, 2008), 126.

<sup>30</sup> David P. Fridovich, speaking for USSOCOM’s role in inter-agency cooperation, on March 11, 2009, to the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats, and Capabilities, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess. (*italics added for emphasis*)

operating in Iraq and Afghanistan links almost immediately to *transregional and global facilitation networks* that pose very real threat to the United States and our interests.”<sup>31</sup> HT exists in a network of illicit actors that are engaged in various activities that destabilize regions. As LTG Fridovich highlighted, those networks pose threats to the United States, supporting HT as a national security threat.

As demonstrated earlier in the geographic comparison of the 2010 Trafficking in Persons report and the JFCOM Future Operating Environment, HT also relates to a particular geographic region known for illicit activities. In addition to the regions previously discussed, there are other regions forming critical nodes in regional and global human trafficking that geographically link with areas that generate the most VEOs transit and operations. For example, “In Albania, which is considered a terrorist transit point, organized crime rings help smuggle terrorists from the Black Sea to Western Europe. Bosnia is also a transit point for Islamic extremists, and the operation is facilitated by extensive links among criminal elements in Bosnia, Russia, Albania, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Croatia, Austria, Germany, and Italy.”<sup>32</sup>

In 2004, the Deputy Inspector General for Inspections & Policy for the Department of Defense made key remarks regarding the DoD’s perception of HT. Specifically he discussed how DoD saw its role as part of a larger US government effort to address HT. Mr. Hansen stated that “as a department (of defense), we are concerned with national security impacts as well as the humanitarian impacts. We are prepared and have begun to act in those areas in which there is a nexus between trafficking activities and U.S. military forces or military missions.”<sup>33</sup> Mr. Hansen

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Rohan Gunaratna and Arabinda Acharya, “Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime in Comparative Perspective,” in *Organized Crime: From Trafficking to Terrorism*. Vol. 1. ed. Frank G. Shanty, (Denver, CO: ABC/CLIO, 2008) 367.

<sup>33</sup> Jerry Hansen, “Mobilizing our Forces for a Coordinated Attack on Human Trafficking: U.S. Department of Defense Plans for Combating Trafficking in Persons,” US Department of Defense, (lecture, Conference on Human Trafficking, Security Implications, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, March 8, 2005), 1.

indicates that HT is a priority within the Department of Defense; however, it appears that the linkage to outside agencies and departments in concert with their counter-HT efforts are not mentioned.

HT also exists as a national security threat because of the increasing complexity assigned to identifying threats. Specifically, actors previously defined as a violent extremist insurgents, now more commonly may be linked to other illicit actors. Therefore, there exists a blurring of the lines between readily identifiable foes and diversified actors that dabble in different destabilizing activities. As one author describes, “As contemporary warfare involves terrorists, guerrillas, bandits, or robbers – not so much regular armies – there is a possibility that the distinction between terrorism, organized crime, and warfare would disappear, especially in the context of asymmetric conflicts.”<sup>34</sup> Organizational and cognitive abilities outside the normal capabilities of any one agency or department must match the complexity of identifying one's foe. This necessitates a whole of government, synchronized operational approach, ideally in concert with partner nations.

## **Methodology and Analysis**

Most Similar Systems Design seeks to compare case studies that share common features, in an effort to neutralize some differences and highlight others. Particularly useful is the difference across outcomes by highlighting that one or two different features that may explain the outcome.<sup>35</sup> In the case of HT, it was beneficial to identify case studies that demonstrate similarity in most of the features, but difference in one or two explanatory features, resulting in a different political outcome. The illicit activities narco-terrorism and illicit arms trafficking share common features of destabilizing activity, and underlying conditions. The two case studies differ from HT in the synchronized approach and environmental effect. Therefore, the key explanatory factor in

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<sup>34</sup> Gunaratna and Acharya, 363-364.

<sup>35</sup> Landham, 70-71.

each case study of illicit activity is the presence or lack of presence of a synchronized approach, and the outcome of that approach on the environment. As will be demonstrated in each case study, the existence of a synchronized approach presents an effective method to address an illicit activity. This directly relates to the hypothesis that USSOCOM should be concerned with HT by augmenting and synchronizing existing approaches. In order to elucidate the need for SOCOM to expand its existing operations by aligning with and supporting existing US government counter-HT operations, narco-terrorism and arms trafficking will be presented as similar systems for a source of comparison. The following table demonstrates the logic of the modified MSSD.

	Narco-Terrorism	Illicit Arms Trafficking	Human Trafficking
<b>Destabilizing Activity (common feature)</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Underlying Conditions (common feature)</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Synchronized Approach (Key explanatory factor)</b>	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Environmental Effect on Stability (outcome)</b>	Yes	Yes	No

The discussion of destabilizing activities and underlying conditions finds its root in a 2009 USAID study that attempted to ascertain the drivers of violent extremism. One of the most important points that the study highlighted was the inability to assign broad, globally sweeping generalizations. Instead, several drivers of violent extremism were context dependent. The drivers that received significant support from their study include: economic development that relates to supporting a democratic system that protects civil liberties; social marginality; denial of basic political rights and civil liberties; harsh and brutal rule that entails gross violations of human rights; widespread corruption and perceived impunity for well-connected elites; poorly governed and ungoverned areas; protracted, violent local conflicts; illegitimate and bankrupt (politically,

economically, and militarily) repressive regimes; and previously existing connections to violent extremism.<sup>36</sup>

The report found that conditions varied from regional/geographic specific to individual characteristics. However, the political drivers related to denial of human rights and rule of law appear to be the most prevalent. That, in conjunction with micro-economic conditions did appear to correlate with violent extremism.<sup>37</sup>

The operational definition of synchronized operational approach implies a multi-government (whether bilateral partnership or under the framework of other international organizations), US Government agency/department operational approach to address the various components of narco, arms, and human trafficking. As a result of a synchronized operational approach, there exists hallmarks of stability, which are contrasts to the previously mentioned drivers of violent extremism, including: democratic governments that protect civil liberties; recognition of basic political rights and civil liberties; enforcement of the rule of law, and economic opportunity.

The purpose of the analysis section is to provide the evidence to support why the hypothesis is correct. Specifically, USSOCOM should seek to augment existing US government counter-HT efforts in support of a broader U.S. strategic framework. Specifically, USSOCOM should provide information/intelligence synchronization to the HSTC and conduct counter-HT TSCP missions to increase partner nation capability to address national and regional HT issues. Currently, USSOCOM expends significant effort to counter both narco-terrorism and the illegal arms trade, but does not appear to address HT. The fundamental point of this analysis is to

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<sup>36</sup> Lynn Carter and Guilain Denoeux, *U.S. Agency for International Development Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism*, USAID, (Washington, DC, 2009).

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

provide a methodological approach to support the claim that USSOCOM should expand its operations to counter-HT.

## **Narco Terrorism**

The nexus between narcotics trafficking and terrorism, or VEO activity, has a long, well documented history. Of particular interest is the convergence between organized crime that uses narcotics trafficking for profit generation and the similar employment of this illicit activity by VEOs. Narco-terrorism may best be defined as “the organized employment of violence against the local populace, the security forces, and the government to intimidate anyone contemplating the resistance of drug trafficking”.<sup>38</sup> Using the common features of destabilizing activity, underlying conditions, synchronized operations, and environmental effect, narco-terrorism describes one of many illicit activities that destabilize a region. The resulting environmental conditions from this activity create opportunities for VEOs to both exist and operate. In addition, the existing synchronized approach demonstrates a positive effect on the environment.

## **Destabilizing Activity**

Narco-terrorism forms as the natural convergence between organized crime and terrorism, often in combination with other illicit activities. By their very nature, narcotics trafficking require the combination of both licit and illicit actors, often with the tacit approval of local law enforcement. The combination of those illicit actors with various terrorists creates a potent combination with clear security concerns. Narco-terrorism is particularly destabilizing in that its profits empower illicit organizations, often increasing their prominence above the recognized government. There emerges a competition between narco-terrorist actors and state control. As formally recognized governments ideally provide the security to enforce the rights of

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<sup>38</sup> Gordon James Knowles, “Threat Analysis: Organized Crime and Narco-Terrorism in Northern Mexico,” *Military Review* 88, no. 1 (2008): 79.

its citizens, empowered illicit organizations gain control over an unwilling population. Through the removal or cooption of the recognized government and usurpation by illicit organizations, the locality or region loses its fundamental human rights and meet the expectations of its populace. The loss of human rights and freedoms further destabilizes areas by the loss of governmental control.

In 2004, then Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict Thomas O’Connell testified before Congress regarding the Department of Defense Counternarcotics budget. In this testimony, he made a few observations that elucidate the connection between the narcotics trade and terrorism. “We recognize that a portion of the profits from drug sales either directly or indirectly support terrorist organizations – another reason we are working hard to reduce the supply of drugs around the world.”<sup>39</sup> In addition, later he claims “Global and regional terrorists threatening the United States interests can finance their activities with the proceeds from narcotics trafficking. Terrorist groups such as the FARC in Colombia, Al Qaida in Afghanistan, and groups around the worlds partially finance key operations with drug money.”<sup>40</sup>

Regions that are well known hubs of narco-terrorism can also adequately describe the confluence of other various illicit activities. In regions such as Southeast Asia, the Tri-border region, the Balkans, and Eurasia, narco-terrorism fuels a constant state of instability, where the affected sovereign nations are unable to protect and control its populace. The Philippines serve as an example of the amalgamation of both illicit activities and the nexus of organized crime and VEOs, “Abu Sayyaf has increased its kidnapping operations since 2000 and operates marijuana

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<sup>39</sup> Senate Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, *Department of Defense Counternarcotics Budget: Statement before the US Senate Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities*, 108<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2004.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.



plantations in the Philippines.”<sup>41</sup> Of particular interest is the effect that narco-terrorism has on the essential functions of the society and state control.

The FARC in Colombia and the Taliban in Afghanistan are two of the most prevalent examples of narco-terrorism. For many years, the activities of narcotics trafficking and VEO activity under the banner of the FARC destabilized Colombia and the region. “Colombian drug cartels are drastically changing the political process both inside and outside of Colombia. This in turn debilitates the viability of political representation and ultimately undermines the rule of law.”<sup>42</sup> In the competition for control over the populace, the massive profits generated by this illicit activity fueled emerging capabilities - capabilities that in turn increased the narco-terrorists’ ability to wrest control of a particular area from the government. When an illicit organization controls a particular area, its interests fall to maintaining and growing its profit base, not on meeting the needs of the populace.

Afghanistan also provides an interesting discussion on the nature of narco-terrorism as a destabilizing activity. At the height of the Taliban rule, the farming of opium poppies was at a historical low<sup>43</sup>; however, as the need to finance terrorist operations in a national insurgency against a nascent Afghan government increased, opium production skyrocketed to historical levels.<sup>44</sup> Did this increasing confluence of narco-terrorism provide better opportunities for the Afghan people? No. As described above, when the narco-terrorist organization wrests control from the legitimate government, the illicit organizations acts in its best interests, not the

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<sup>41</sup> Tamara Makarenko, “A model of terrorist-criminal relations” *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, 77, no. 8 (2003).

<sup>42</sup> Nathan Moran, “Concept of Transnational Organized Crime,” in *Organized Crime: From Trafficking to Terrorism*. ed. Frank G. Shanty, vol.1.(Denver, CO: ABC/CLIO, 2008), 42.

<sup>43</sup> Pino Arlacchi, *Under Secretary General Executive Director United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention speech to the Permanent Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe*, OSCE (Vienna, Austria, 2001). Chester, G. Oehme III, “Terrorists, Insurgents, and Criminals – Growing Nexus?” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 31 (2008): 83.

<sup>44</sup> Chester, G. Oehme III, “Terrorists, Insurgents, and Criminals – Growing Nexus?” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 31 (2008): 83.

population's interests. Its narco-terrorists' activities further destabilized Afghanistan by creating a civilian dependency on the narco-terrorist organization for sustenance and financial security, using violence a means to force popular compliance.

Secretary O'Connell states, "financial, political and operational linkages exist among narcotics trafficking, smuggling, and the global expansion of terrorism."<sup>45</sup> However, he does not state that the removal of any one illicit activity will serve as the panacea leading towards national and regional stabilization. Narco-terrorism serves as one of many destabilizing activities. The nature of these activities creates and feeds on conditions of abject poverty, poor government penetration, large demographic shifts, and poor economic opportunities that create a void ripe for exploitation by VEOs.<sup>46</sup>

### Underlying Conditions that Foment VEOs

As described above, narco-terrorism is one of many destabilizing activities. The logical and demonstrated result of these illicit activities is an area or region dominated by atrocious conditions that permit the existence and operations of VEOs. The conditions that result from the combination of illicit activities such as narco-terrorism include, but are not limited to: abject poverty, lawlessness, shadow governments, extortion, poor government penetration, poor economic opportunities, and disputed population control. Max Manwaring describes the activities of gangs and illicit actors as one that seeks to "control ungoverned territory within a nation-state and/or begin to acquire political power...intended to provide security and freedom of movement

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<sup>45</sup> Senate Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, *Department of Defense Counternarcotics Budget: Statement before the US Senate Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities*, 108<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2004.

<sup>46</sup> Carter and Denoeux.

for gang activities”.<sup>47</sup> The aforementioned conditions are the very ones that VEOs seek when establishing some network hub or operations, because it permits minimal government intervention in their activities, and provides an available disenfranchised population ripe for exploitation. The shifting of power from legitimate government entity to narco-terrorist facilitator/organization forces the population to succumb to the rights deemed important to that illicit organization. As stated earlier, traditional human rights are not in the best interest of criminal and VEOs, who seek to control populations. There appears to be a nebulous circle of organizations and conditions that without significant intervention, spiral into an area devoid of effective government control. Determining which existed first, whether it is poor environmental conditions or the TCO/VEOs that exploit them is difficult to ascertain; however, the existence of certain economic, political, security, and environmental conditions appear to foment the existence of VEOs.<sup>48</sup>

There are several nations where narco-terrorism particularly leads to, or at least confounds, underlying environmental conditions. Mentioned earlier, Afghanistan and Colombia provided lucid examples of atrocious environmental conditions that foment the existence and operations of VEOs. In another example, Mexico is currently struggling under the weight of an extreme rise in violence from drug cartel activity. However, given some of the stated goals of the cartels to supplant existing government structures, they easily fall into the realm of narco-terrorist. The resulting and contributing environmental conditions in a city like Ciudad-Juarez exemplify abject poverty, lack of government control and penetration, shadow governments, lack of economic opportunities, and lawlessness. Over time, those conditions provide further opportunities for narco-terrorist to become bolder and more capable of destabilizing activities –

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<sup>47</sup> Max G. Manwaring, *A Contemporary Challenge to State Sovereignty: Gangs and Other Illicit Transnational Criminal Organizations in Central America, El Salvador, Mexico, Jamaica, and Brazil* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), 6.

<sup>48</sup> Carter and Denoeux.

thereby creating a cycle of illicit activity and environmental conditions. As one author describes in her study on the levels of cooperation between organized crime and terrorist groups, “Instability is in the interest of terrorists because it diminishes the legitimacy of governments in the eyes of the mass populations...and it is in the interest of criminal groups seeking to maximize criminal operations”.<sup>49</sup>

By the nature of the conditions described above, a strictly military or political response will not address the underlying conditions. Conditions defined by rule of law, government penetration, respect of human rights and freedoms, and economic opportunity are generally not directly affected by military operations. Therefore, the underlying conditions necessitate an indirect operational approach utilizing both the US government’s elements of national power *and* the relative effected nation(s).

## Existing Synchronized Operational Approaches

Due to the long history demonstrating the convergence between narcotics trafficking and terrorist organizations, synchronized operational approaches to address narco-terrorism are common. Within the US government, agencies and departments take a holistic view of combating narco-terrorism, which often includes the result of Joint Interagency Task Forces (JIATF) in the DoD Combatant Commands. These JIATFs form as the hub of a centralized, whole of government response to a clear national security issue. As part of USSOCOM’s indirect approach in countering VEOs, they often conduct counter narco-terrorism missions by, with, and through their interagency partners and partner nations.

Referring back to former Secretary O’Connell’s speech, he recognizes the necessity of a synchronized approach to narco-terrorism, specifically focused on DoD’s cooperation with other

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<sup>49</sup> Tamara Makarenko, “The Crime-Terror Continuum: Tracing the Interplay between Transnational Organised Crime and Terrorism,” *Global Crime*, 6, no. 1(2004): 132.

agencies to “to systematically dismantle drug trafficking networks, both to halt the flow of drugs into the United States, and to bolster the broader war on terrorism effort.”<sup>50</sup> He not only describes what needs to be done, but what is occurring as a demonstration of a synchronized indirect operational approach that uses “unique military personnel, systems, and capabilities that support domestic law enforcement agencies and foreign security forces involved in counternarcotics activities, including efforts to counter activities that aid, benefit from, or are related to narcotics trafficking.”<sup>51</sup>

USSOCOM recognized that CNT missions were imperative in its ability to counter VEOs throughout the globe. Their indirect operational approach included information and intelligence synchronization across other DoD and US Government agencies, as well as partnered training events with foreign law enforcement and security forces. Often working in concert with the COCOM JIATFs, SOCOM’s global reach and persistent presence provided an opportunity to exponentially increase the effectiveness of the US Government to address narco-terrorism as a security threat.

## Effect on Stability

Because of the long-standing, holistic approaches to CNT, there have been positive effects on particular nations and regions. By positive effect, there is an implication of a return to conditions that fall in line with the previously mentioned hallmarks of stability. Particularly, because of a synchronized operational approach, there exist hallmarks of stability, which are essentially contrasts to the drivers for violent extremism previously discussed: respect for basic

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<sup>50</sup> Senate Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, *Department of Defense Counternarcotics Budget: Statement before the US Senate Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities*, 108<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2004.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

political rights and civil liberties, transparent government; government penetration and population control; enforcement of the rule of law; and economic opportunity.

In a 2004 statement at the Joint Interagency Task Force-West (JIATF-W) change of command ceremony, Admiral Tom Fargo described the systemic effect on countering narco-terrorism in the Pacific region through JIATF-W operations and coordination:

This team is credited with the interdiction of 44.9 metric tons of narcotics, valued at over one billion dollars. JIATF – West’s interagency intelligence fusion center – established during this same period – is responsible for interdicting well over 5 million methamphetamine tablets and apprehending nearly 50 drug traffickers in Thailand. JIATF-West coordinated and oversaw the training of nearly 2000 military and law enforcement personnel throughout Southeast Asia, while establishing the first three counter-narco terrorism tactical analysis teams in Asia.<sup>52</sup>

Of note, both the Philippines and Colombia have seen remarkable progress in controlling narco-terrorism within their borders.<sup>53</sup> SOCOM maintains persistent presence in both of those nations, exercised through the Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs). “JIATF-West [from USPACOM] executed 17 counter-narco-terrorism-training missions which trained 1,578 partner nation law enforcement officials from Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam in ground and maritime interdiction skills.”<sup>54</sup> While these numbers are encouraging, they do not necessarily demonstrate the effect of these operations. There have been significant improvements in investigations and prosecutions of narco-terrorism that appears to directly related to the increased training provided through a synchronized approach.<sup>55</sup> Through their efforts of increasing information and intelligence synchronization and partner nation capacity to address narco-terrorism, Philippine officials have had a substantial positive improvement,

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<sup>52</sup> Tom Fargo, “Speech at the JIATF-West Change of Command on July 16, 2004” NMPCC, <http://www.pacom.mil/speeches/sst2004/040716jiaft.shtml> (Accessed May 11, 2010).

<sup>53</sup> Alvaro de Souza Pinheiro, “Narcoterrorism in Latin America: A Brazilian Perspective,” (Joint Special Operations University, JSOU Report 06-04, 2006), 27-28.

<sup>54</sup> Senate Armed Services Committee, *Statement of the Commander Admiral Robert F. Willard, U.S. Navy, Commander, US Pacific Command before the Senate Armed Services Committee on US Pacific Command Posture, March 24, 2010*, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 2010.

<sup>55</sup> De Souza Pinheiro.

creating a new set of conditions that inhibit both the growth and activity of VEOs within their sovereign territory.

Specific to Colombia, JIATF-South, working with its Colombian partners, has significantly affected the ability of narco-terrorists to both exist and operate. Colombian officials, in combination with US partners and their own synchronized approach, demonstrate both an increasing capacity and effectiveness in addressing narco-trafficking. Specific to Columbia, the dominant cartels that fed both the FARC's operations and global narcotics trafficking have been splintered and dismantled in many cases. "In November [2005], Colombian officials arrested Farouk Sheikh Reyes on suspicion of distributing more than 600 tons of cocaine to Europe and the United States to fund multiple Colombian illegal armed groups."<sup>56</sup> While the FARC remains a security threat to the Colombian state, its ability to destabilize Colombia is limited, due in large part to a coordinated, synchronized response from the Colombian and US governments. While a synchronized approach appears intuitive based on the illicit activities and resulting environmental conditions, there remains opportunities to improve. Specifically, as will be demonstrated later, a synchronized approach could further address both underlying conditions and symptomatic illicit activities, thereby decreasing the effectiveness of VEOs throughout nations and regions.

## **Arms Trafficking**

In addition to narco-terrorism, regional and global arms trafficking are one of many illicit activities that converge to form a detrimental effect on societies, but also increase the lethality and capability of VEOs. Often implicitly linked with narco-trafficking, it forms a potent area of study to elucidate an illicit activity currently addressed by USSOCOM, in addition to other US

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<sup>56</sup> U.S. Department of State, *2005 Western Hemisphere Terrorism Report*, U.S. Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2005/64346.htm> (Accessed August, 19 2010).

agencies through a synchronized indirect operational approach. Of particular interest relative to arms trafficking is the combination of both profits and increased lethal capabilities of illicit organizations. This resulting combination creates clear security concerns, and demonstrates the necessity of attention. However, as continually stressed, the isolation of this illicit activity does not serve as the silver bullet to address all conditions that foment VEO existence and operations. Therefore, it is important to understand arms trafficking as yet another color in the rainbow of illicit activities that destabilizes a region.

### Destabilizing Activity

Arms trafficking seeks to illicitly provide weapons, munitions, and explosives to organizations that use violence to achieve their ends. By its very nature, illicit arms trafficking nests with any type of nefarious organization bent on expanding its capability to utilize violence; however, it is often complicit with law enforcement and security organizations.<sup>57</sup> As such, arms trafficking is yet another color in the rainbow of illicit activities. The particularly dangerous effect on environmental conditions is rooted in the expansion in the means to control populations through violence. The conditions that foment VEO existence and operations, with respect to arms trafficking, are the same as narco terrorism: social marginalization, denial of basic human rights and civil liberties, widespread corruption, poorly governed or ungoverned areas, protracted violence, illegitimate and repressive regimes, and poor economic opportunity.<sup>58</sup>

Similar to narco-trafficking, illicit arms trafficking is a profit generator. The beneficiary of that profit may be for a transnational organized crime element or a VEO, or a combination of both. Increasingly, terrorists blur the lines between idealized operations to ones that must sustain future operations through profit generation. Criminal activities...are seen as key cash generators,

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<sup>57</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Firearms Trafficking: US Efforts to Combat Arms Trafficking to Mexico Face Planning and Coordination Challenges*, (Washington, DC, 2007), 4.

<sup>58</sup> Carter and Denoeux.



especially for groups operating under the al-Qaeda banner in Yemen and Somalia.<sup>59</sup> In one report, black market small arms trafficking generated \$1 billion per year in profit.<sup>60</sup> This amorphous, or gray market, appears exceedingly attractive to both transnational criminals and VEOs, in that global transactions may occur with little possibility for enforcement. “As conflicts translated into armed confrontations, the demand-supply asymmetries involving weapons, information, skills, and other controlled goods spurred the trading of these goods in the gray market.”<sup>61</sup>

In addition to the combination of profit and increased illicit organization’s lethal capabilities, illicit arms trafficking “fuels internal conflicts, which, in turn, breed the lawlessness in which terrorism, drug trafficking and other transnational crime thrives”.<sup>62</sup> In a 2005 statement before the Organization of American States (OAS) small arms/light weapons (SA/LW) meeting, U.S. Ambassador Robert Loftis stated “Given the close links between terrorism, organized crime and drug trafficking, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has the potential to affect any country in the world at any time; it is not limited to regions of conflict, instability, or poverty.”<sup>63</sup> The remarkable facet of arms trafficking is that unlike other illicit activities, it can directly cause destabilization by providing weapons to illicit actors. Therefore, in uncontrolled areas, the amount of arms trafficking logically relates with the amount of violence. The resulting violence generated from this activity further compounds the conditions that permitted its existence. Those conditions further provide opportunities for VEOs to exist and operate.

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<sup>59</sup> Bruno, Greg, “Al-Qaeda’s Financial Pressures,” Council on Foreign Relations. [http://www.cfr.org/publication/21347/alqaedas\\_financial\\_pressures.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/21347/alqaedas_financial_pressures.html) (Accessed February 27, 2010).

<sup>60</sup> Rachel Stohl, “The Tangled Web of Illicit Arms Trafficking,” American Progress, <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2004/10/b217737.html> (Accessed August 20, 2010).

<sup>61</sup> Gunaratna and Acharya, 365.

<sup>62</sup> Federation of American Scientists (FAS), “Occasional Paper No 1: Small Arms, Terrorism, and the OAS Firearms Convention,” Federation of American Scientists, <http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/asmp/issueareas/oas.html> (Accessed August, 19 2010).

<sup>63</sup> Richard G. Loftis, “Remarks to the Organization of American States Small Arms/Light Weapons Meeting,” Organization of American States, <http://fas.org/asmp/campaigns/smallarms/StateOAS14apr05.htm> (Accessed August 19, 2010).

There is recent evidence that further suggests arms trafficking with a broader collection of illicit activities. In a 2004 report analyzing 55 UN participant nations, 17 self identified as having an observed link between arms trafficking and terrorism, and an additional 13 nations observed links between terrorism and theft of firearms or explosives.<sup>64</sup> Throughout scholarly literature, arms trafficking is rarely mentioned in isolation, or as a sole contributor to destabilizing conditions; however, its amalgamation with other illicit activities. In one of the most common cited evidence between arms trafficking and other illicit activities occurs in the ongoing US prosecution of Victor Bout, a former KGB agent that rose to infamy as a global arms trader. Bout was widely criticized by world governments by increasing the violence of national and regional conflicts by supplying the weapons.<sup>65</sup> It appears that his illicit activities as an arms smuggler directly destabilized nations and regions by combining profit and increased organizational lethality.

As with narco-terrorism, illicit arms trafficking creates and exists in a confluence of environmental conditions that permit both the existence and operations of VEOs. As one RAND study highlighted, “Guns-in terms of cross-border spillover of violence – can have as much of a deleterious effect as drugs on the stability of neighboring countries.”<sup>66</sup> Since there is a logical correlation between the illicit activities and the underlying environmental conditions that foment VEO existence and operations, there is a similar discussion of underlying environmental conditions between narco trafficking/terrorism and arms trafficking.

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<sup>64</sup> Vivienne Chin and Dandurand, Yvon, *Links between Terrorism and Other Forms of Crime*, (British Columbia, CA: International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy, 2004), 14.

<sup>65</sup> Thomas Fuller, “Arms Suspect Vows to Win Case in U.S. After Extradition Order,” *New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/21/world/asia/21thai.html?src=tptw> (Accessed August 20, 2010).

<sup>66</sup> Kim Cragin and Bruce Hoffman, *Arms Trafficking and Colombia*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, National Defense Research Institute, 2003), 67.

## Underlying Conditions that Foment VEOs

As described above with respect to narco-terrorism, arms trafficking both creates and exists in a set of conditions that permit the existence and operations of VEOs. By equipping illicit organizations with the tools to conduct violent actions, arms trafficking exacerbates any unstable society and/or region by competing with the government's implied monopoly of violence over its population. The remarkable component to arms trafficking is the immediate and direct negative effect on the environment (both physical and human) through the introduction of SA/LW's into the hands of illicit actors. While intuitive, the introduction of significant numbers of weapons escalates violence. The FARC exemplifies increased weapons capability and escalation of violence.<sup>67</sup> It is possible that the influx of SA/LW enables the VEOs or TCOs to increase their violent capability beyond the ability of a sovereign nation to control. These observations directly tie into the aforementioned USAID study on the drivers of violent extremism, particularly related to harsh and brutal rule that denies human rights and the protracted and violent conflicts. However, as with narco-terrorism, increased synchronized efforts currently exist, attempting to decrease or manage the effect of illicit arms trafficking.

## Existing Synchronized Operational Approaches

One of the elements of arms trafficking that receives more than ample attention from the US Government, and USSOCOM in particular, is the illicit trade in weapons of mass destruction (WMD). This component of arms trafficking is a national security priority, and receives the appropriate resources, political, and military support to engage arms traffickers that might spread WMDs. However, for this monograph, arms trafficking relates specifically to small arms trafficking and explosives, or as previously mentioned, SA/LW.

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 54.

Throughout the globe, wherever US special operations occur, especially in present combat zones, disrupting arms trafficking is a major component of operations. While the operations are classified in nature, removing the means for VEOs to conduct attacks against US soldiers and interests remains an operational priority. In regions outside of the combat theaters, characterized by USSOCOM's indirect approach, US SOF and our partners conduct similar operations, attempting to disrupt major flows and caches of SA/LW in a particular nation/region.

While outside a synchronized approach sponsored by the US, the Brazilian government is currently engaged in a very effective operational approach to counter arms trafficking and other illicit activities that continue to destabilize parts of the country. From prison renovation, legal reform, military and law enforcement operations, and legal cases to remove government corruption, Brazil demonstrates a synchronized approach and is seeing positive results through increased criminal prosecutions.<sup>68</sup> There is some evidence that both JIATF-South and JIATF – West are actively addressing arms trafficking within their respective theaters, demonstrating a clear understanding of taking a holistic operational approach to address these destabilizing activities.<sup>69</sup> The employment of Joint Interagency Task Forces to address trafficking models the appropriate synchronized approach required to address illicit activities that span more than one government agency or department.

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<sup>68</sup> Alvaro de Souza Pinheiro, "Irregular Warfare: Brazil's Fight Against Criminal Urban Guerrillas," (Joint Special Operations University, JSOU Report 09-08, 2009), 36.

<sup>69</sup> United States Southern Command, "Counter Drug/Counter Narco-terrorism", JIATF-South, <http://www.southcom.mil/appssc/pages/counternarco.php> (Accessed September 15, 2010). United States Southern Command, "Commander's Blog, February 26, 2009", USSOUTHCOM, <http://www.southcom.mil/AppsSC/Blog.php?id=41> (Accessed September 15, 2010). Senate Armed Services Committee, *Statement of the Commander, Admiral Robert F. Willard, U.S. Navy, Commander, US Pacific Command before the Senate Armed Services Committee on US Pacific Command Posture March 24, 2010*, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 2010.

## Effect on Stability

Due to the clear linkage between arms trafficking and national and regional security, it receives ample attention from both military and political leaders from the United States and our regional partners. While the effect may be difficult to ascertain, one may consider the removal of a certain number of weapons from an unstable area as an indicator of the decreasing lethality of VEOs within a given region. For example, in a recent statement by outgoing SOUTHCOM Commander Admiral Stavridis at the SOCSOUTH change of command, he highlighted the successful special operations, through partner nation support, to disrupt a terrorist attack on a major U.S. city, resulting in not just the capture of four terrorists, but also millions of dollars worth of weapons.<sup>70</sup> Returning to Colombia, “between 1995 and 2001, Colombia’s military seized more than 15,000 small arms that were circulating in its black market, along with 2.5 million rounds of ammunition.”<sup>71</sup> While the numbers alone do not necessarily indicate a move towards stability, they do indicate the removal of certain violent capability to illicit actors. In his 2005 US Southern Command posture statement, General Craddock stated that Colombia’s violent crime, including homicides, decreased to its lowest levels in eighteen years.<sup>72</sup>

The U.S., along with its partner nations continues to make progress on illicit arms trafficking, reducing the lethality of VEOs and transnational criminal organizations. There are still many opportunities to increase the effectiveness of operational approaches, considering the size and scope of illicit arms trafficking.

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<sup>70</sup> James G. Stavridis, “SOCSOUTH Change of Command Ceremony Speech, July 18, 2008,” U.S. Southern Command, <http://www.southcom.mil/AppsSC/files/0UI011217531640.pdf> (Accessed August 10, 2010).

<sup>71</sup> Rachel Stohl, “The Tangled Web of Illicit Arms Trafficking,” American Progress, <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2004/10/b217737.html> (Accessed August 20, 2010).

<sup>72</sup> House Armed Services Committee, *Posture Statement of General Bantz J. Craddock, US Army, Commander, United States Southern Command*, 109<sup>th</sup> Cong., March 16, 2006.

## Human Trafficking

As an interesting juxtaposition with narco-terrorism and illicit arms trafficking, human trafficking does not receive the same operational attention from the US DoD, despite evidence that suggests its destabilizing nature.<sup>73</sup> A logical reason could be its inherent human rights *component*, while narco-terrorism and arms trafficking have human rights *effects*. Whatever the reason for DoD's lack of apparent focus on HT, it remains a priority of this paper to demonstrate the nature of HT as another destabilizing activity that creates and exists in the conditions that allow VEO operations, and thereby requires a similar synchronized operational approach. Therefore, presentation of HT follows the same variables as previously covered; however, the differences that logically lead to different results will be emphasized. Specifically, this report demonstrates that the lack of a synchronized US Government approach results in negligible effects on nations and regions where HT occurs.

## Destabilizing Activity

A previous section described the size and scope of HT, as well as its description as a national security threat. By its very nature, HT is a destabilizing activity. An activity denying basic human rights, and potentially threatens the security of individual states and regions. Human trafficking rarely exists in pure isolation from other illicit activities, which may include narco and arms trafficking, and other criminal activities that fall under the purview of organized crime and VEOs.

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<sup>73</sup> Colleen M. Traugher, "Terror-Crime Nexus? Terrorism and Arms, Drug, and Human Trafficking in Georgia" (master's thesis, the Fletcher School at Tufts University, 2007); U.S. Department of State, *2010 Trafficking In Persons Report* (Washington, DC, 2010); United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, UNODC (Vienna, Austria, 2009); House Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Human Rights, Gary Haugen, *Statement at the Global Trends in Trafficking and the 'Trafficking in Persons Report*, 108<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., June 25, 2003; Tamara Makarenko, "Bodysnatchers" *Jane's Policy Review Community*, January 25, 2008.

The previously mentioned UNODC report highlights global HT trends. As an interesting juxtaposition, their description of HT supports the observation that HT generally follows some migration patterns identified in the 2008 USSOCOM Strategic Appreciation document. The Strategic Appreciation highlights three “dominant strategic themes: security concerns, economic development, and demographic flux...which manifests [sic] itself through transnational crime, growing extremism, and accelerating migration patterns.”<sup>74</sup> From the juxtaposition of the UNODC document and the USSOCOM Strategic Appreciation arises the logical conclusion that HT is part of a larger collection of illicit activities that destabilizes regions. In a 2004 speech before Congress, the former EUCOM commander, General James Jones stated, “terrorist groups increasingly adopt the same methods as organized crime and have developed their own money laundering, drug processing and trafficking rings, as well as human smuggling operations.”<sup>75</sup> The observation that HT occurs in congruence with other illicit activities is not novel; however, the implications for the US DoD and USSOCOM as they attempt to address sources of instability to prevent VEOs appears original.

HT destabilizes areas through illicit profit generation and the exploitation of individuals’ human rights. As previously mentioned, HT’s amalgamation with other illicit activities poses a national security threat. As Louise Shelley observes, in areas where illicit markets are prevalent, HT does demonstrate links with terrorism and the drug trade – areas such as the Balkans, SE Asia, the Philippines and parts of the former Soviet Union.<sup>76</sup> From the US Department of State’s

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<sup>74</sup> U.S. Special Operations Command, “Strategic Appreciation USSOCOM Draft”, (U.S. Special Operations Command, MacDill AFB, Florida, November, 13, 2008).

<sup>75</sup> Senate Armed Services Committee, *Statement of General James L. Jones, USMC, Commander, United States European Command Before the Senate Armed Services Committee*, 109<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 2006.

<sup>76</sup> Louise Shelley and John T. Picarelli, “Methods not Motives: Implications of the Convergence of International Organized Crime and Terrorism,” (Washington DC: Transnational Crime and Corruption Center, American University, 2004); House Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Human Rights, *Global Trends in Trafficking and the ‘Trafficking in Persons Report*, 108<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., June 25, 2003.

HSTC charter, “The related global problems of migrant smuggling, trafficking in persons and clandestine terrorist travel are increasingly significant both in terms of the human tragedy they represent and their impact on national security, primarily with respect to terrorism, crime, health and welfare, and border control.”<sup>77</sup> The Tamil Tigers (LTTE) of Sri Lanka is well known for their involvement in several illicit activities. Recent criminal investigations “have uncovered several LTTE-controlled smuggling rings trafficking as many as 600 people at a time to the European Union on forged documentation. The average charge per transaction is between US\$18,000 and \$32,000 – illustrating the profit potential.”<sup>78</sup> However, unlike illicit arms trafficking that has a directly destabilizing effect due to the introduction of violent means, HT appears to destabilize regions through more hidden second and third order effects. The exploitation of individual’s human rights create an environment where human life is devalued, and many of the victims display characteristics akin to post-traumatic stress disorder.<sup>79</sup> This further complicates the victim’s ability to become productive members of society and contributors to a stable region.

Transnational criminal organizations exist because there is a demand for their goods and services, and there is a market in which the transactions may occur. These illicit or informal markets provide the cauldron where various nefarious actors may interact, often with little formal government oversight or control. Some authors express that the gap of economic opportunity as a result of “globalization has marginalized and impoverished many communities in the developing world, forcing them to engage in illicit activities to survive...their only means of survival is to

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<sup>77</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center (HSTC) Charter and Amendments*, U.S. Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/m/ds/hstcenter/41444.htm> (Accessed March 16, 2010).

<sup>78</sup> Tamara Makarenko, “A model of terrorist-criminal relations” *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, 77, no. 8 (2003).

<sup>79</sup> Heather J. Clawson, Amy Saloman, and Lisa Goldblatt, “Treating the Hidden Wounds: Trauma Treatment and Mental health Recovery for Victims of Human Trafficking,” US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistance Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/07/humantrafficking/Treating/ib.htm> (Accessed August 20, 2010).



enter into the shadow economy.”<sup>80</sup> The lack of government control spawns an increase in both the size of the market and its physical market extensions. As one author cleverly point out “both the criminals and terrorists have been remarkably successful in exploiting to their advantage the enormous discrepancies in [financial] regulation in a globalized world.”<sup>81</sup> Increasingly, states recognize HT as an illegal activity, but its economic traction often prevents local governments from fully addressing HT in concert with other illicit activities.

HT remains an illicit activity that destabilizes nations and regions through its ties to the illicit economy, its recognition as a national security threat, and the human rights impacts it has on its victims. The combined effects between HT and other illicit activities provide an exponentially more unstable area that creates and exists within conditions that are ripe for exploitation by VEOs. As one author points out, “This collusion [between various illicit trafficking] while primarily occurring in failed states or ungoverned regions of the world, has spill over potential to rock the developed world.”<sup>82</sup>

## Underlying Conditions that Foment VEOs

The composite of illicit activities such as human trafficking, narco trafficking, arms smuggling, terrorist training and movement create underlying environmental conditions that provide an opportunity ripe for VEO exploitation. Those environmental conditions may include the presence of illicit or informal markets, weak state and regional laws, an ineffective law enforcement apparatus, corrupt legal systems, or local social factors.<sup>83</sup> In a 2001 speech before the OSCE, Pino Arlacchi elucidates the security threat posed by illicit activities when he states

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<sup>80</sup> Louise Shelley, “The Unholy Trinity: Transnational Crime, Corruption, and Terrorism”, *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, 11, no. 2 (2005): 103.

<sup>81</sup> Gunaratna and Acharya, 365.

<sup>82</sup> Traughber, “Terror-Crime Nexus? Terrorism and Arms, Drug, and Human Trafficking in Georgia,” 24.

<sup>83</sup> U.S. Department of State, *2010 Trafficking In Persons Report* (Washington, DC, 2010).

that “the vulnerability of open societies to manipulation by criminal undergrounds was demonstrated in a way that forces us to rethink what should be the proper balance between freedom and security” and later calls for a “deeper search of root causes”.<sup>84</sup> Arlacchi’s comments nine years ago ring true to this day: that the root causes of violence that creates conditions for terrorism fundamentally link to HT and other illicit activities. As Sharon Melzer cogently points out “numerous factors such as weak laws, the globalization of the world’s economy, civil and regional unrest, illiteracy, ignorance, the subordination of women in societies, and economic crisis facilitate human trafficking.”<sup>85</sup> Specifically in regards to illicit markets, the cycle of black profits from HT fuels “the expansion in the transnational organized crime, the weakening of domestic and international law, and the increased corruption of governments.”<sup>86</sup>

The underlying conditions that result from and contribute to HT demonstrate similarity with narco-terrorism and arms trafficking, consistent with the Most Similar Systems Design methodology. One author posits that HT links to the licit economy through gray actors that facilitate profit and good transfers between licit actors and illicit organizations.<sup>87</sup> This facet may serve to confuse the problem with the population, creating a view that HT may be a legitimate activity through tacit approval by law enforcement. In those societies, families are often complicit in providing victims of HT.<sup>88</sup>

The regions of West Africa and the South American Tri-Border region are infamous for their atrocious environmental conditions and VEO existence and operation. West Africa, in

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<sup>84</sup> Pino Arlacchi, *Under Secretary General Executive Director United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention speech to the Permanent Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe*, OSCE (Vienna, Austria, 2001).

<sup>85</sup> Sharon Anne Melzer, “International Trafficking of Men, Women, and Children,” in *Organized Crime: From Trafficking to Terrorism*. ed. Frank G. Shanty, vol.1, (Denver, CO: ABC/CLIO, 2008), 209.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 207.

<sup>87</sup> House Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Human Rights, *Global Trends in Trafficking and the ‘Trafficking in Persons Report’*, 108<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., June 25, 2003.

<sup>88</sup> U.S. Department of State, *2010 Trafficking In Persons Report* (Washington, DC, 2010).

particular, demonstrates the most nefarious form of HT, ones that involve child exploitation. The underlying conditions of inadequate educational, vocational, and economic opportunities combine with the demand for cheap labor and the absence of legal enforcement (against HT) permit a near endless pool of children commonly exploited by VEOs.<sup>89</sup> During the conflicts in West and Central Africa, one of most well known VEOs was the RUF, and its use of child soldiers. This exploitation continues to this day with the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) based in and around the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is difficult to ascertain a causal loop that clearly describes which component came first: either the horrible environmental conditions or the existence of VEOs that exploit the population; however, it is clear that their combination exacerbates any government attempt to intercede.

The South American tri-border region is not just a hub of illicit activity, including human trafficking, but it also marked by its deplorable environmental conditions (human and physical).<sup>90</sup> The local inhabitants exist in various levels of poverty and minimal economic opportunity, with even basic services neglected.<sup>91</sup> This poor quality of life is consistent with the USAID drivers of violent extremism mentioned earlier, at least as the micro-economic level of analysis. Thereby the residents turned to criminal elements to maintain any sort of quality of life, despite the observed and hidden costs on their society. The criminal and VEO opportunists preyed on an area where government control had little to no effect on the illicit market networks.<sup>92</sup>

Through the discussion on the nexus or convergence between organized crime and VEOs there is substantial discussion on both the antecedent conditions that foment VEO existence and

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<sup>89</sup> Georgios A. Antonopoulos, "Child Trafficking in West Africa" in *Organized Crime: From Trafficking to Terrorism*. ed. Frank G. Shanty, Vol.1, (Denver, CO: ABC/CLIO, 2008), 165.

<sup>90</sup> Alvaro de Souza Pinheiro, "Narcoterrorism in Latin America: A Brazilian Perspective," (Joint Special Operations University, JSOU Report 06-04, 2006), 37.

<sup>91</sup> Adam Dulin, "Organized Criminal Activity in South America's Tri-Border Region" in *Organized Crime: From Trafficking to Terrorism*. ed. Frank G. Shanty, vol.1, (Denver, CO: ABC/CLIO, 2008), 160.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

the resulting conditions that permit future VEO operations and opportunities. The aforementioned USSOCOM Strategic Appreciation mentions those antecedent conditions. In review, the appreciation highlights three “dominant strategic themes: security concerns, economic development, and demographic flux...which manifests itself through transnational crime, growing extremism, and accelerating migration patterns.”<sup>93</sup> It is worth reiterating that HT, in isolation, does not represent any significant national security threat; however its existence alongside other destabilizing activities that have an exponentially harmonious effect provide significant national and regional destabilization. As the functional command under the Department of Defense tasked to synchronize the US Government’s response to terrorism, VEOs, and hence, regional stability, USSOCOM has a strategic and operational interest in countering Human Trafficking.

The underlying conditions that revolve around HT are the same as those that exist around narco-terrorism and arms trafficking. Conditions such as abject poverty, poor environmental opportunity, lack of government penetration and control, and lawlessness characterize nations and regions that feed the global demand for victims of HT. While ongoing efforts to address HT have been remarkable, the synchronized approaches to narco-terrorism and arms trafficking do not appear to model existing counter HT approaches. The following section demonstrates the existing approaches to address HT.

## Operational Approaches

In 2000, the US enacted the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), and the United Nations adopted the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (the Palermo Protocol).<sup>94</sup> Since both documents’ inception, both the US and other nations have made significant progress in passing the necessary laws to

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<sup>93</sup> U.S. Special Operations Command, “Strategic Appreciation USSOCOM Draft”, (U.S. Special Operations Command, MacDill AFB, Florida, November, 13, 2008).

<sup>94</sup> U.S. Department of State, *2010 Trafficking In Persons Report* (Washington, DC, 2010), 5.

diminish HT within their borders, and yet it remains only a fraction of the massive scope of the problem. Both of the documents identify HT as a crime against the individual, an important point that provides the Human Rights linkage to HT and other existing US Government activities. The US based its approach to counter-HT from the Palermo Protocol, which focused on the 3P approach: prevention, criminal prosecution, and victim protection.<sup>95</sup> While the approach appears to take a holistic view of the problem, there are clear gaps in both its conceptualization and implementation by signatory nations. In fact, as the 2010 Trafficking in Persons (TiP) Report points out, “no country has yet attained a truly comprehensive response to this massive, ever increasing, ever changing crime.”<sup>96</sup> The TiP highlights the importance of “partnership” as a method to combat HT. In the context of the 2010 TiP, partnership refers across all of the “3P approach” – prevention, prosecution and protection. When referring to the integration of partnership across the 3P’s, the TiP report specifically mentions “task forces among law enforcement agencies that cooperate to share intelligence, work across jurisdictions, and coordinate across borders.”<sup>97</sup> Although not included in this report, a partnership with USSOCOM that maintains persistent presence across the globe would be beneficial to any existing efforts to counter HT.

The lead U.S. Government agency for addressing HT is the Department of State, and together with the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice, they organize and maintain the Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center.<sup>98</sup> The HSTC currently functions as a multi-agency fusion center for “intelligence, law enforcement and other information to enhance coordination and communication with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), including

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>98</sup> *The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004*, US Code (2004), §1777.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), along with other US Government agencies in combating human traffickers, smugglers, and criminals facilitating *terrorist travel*.<sup>99</sup> As part of the Department of State's efforts to coordinate the US Government response to HT, various agencies occupy permanent positions that inform the center's actions, including the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Department of Labor (DOL), US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS).<sup>100</sup> Each of these departments or agencies provides the needed expertise within their field relative to HT. Noticeably absent is the US Department of Defense. The 2007 GAO report specifically discussed the importance for interagency collaboration, yet did not include one of the largest US government departments to ameliorate this growing illicit activity.

In addition to the TVPA, the National Security Presidential Directive 22 outlines the Executive Office's response to Human Trafficking, as well as the understanding of HT as a security threat.<sup>101</sup> In it, President Bush states that the policy must vigorously enforce the law, raise awareness, identify and protect the victims, reduce the vulnerability of individuals, and use diplomacy and foreign policy tools to combat HT.<sup>102</sup> Clearly identified as both a domestic and foreign policy issue, the directive sought to encourage and establish relationships and coordination points that facilitate a whole of government response. However, in 2007 GAO report, the strategic guidance from NSPD-22 did not result in a cogent strategic framework.

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<sup>99</sup> House Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Border, Maritime, and Global Counterterrorism, Kumar, C. Kibble, *Deputy Director, Office of Investigations, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security Statement to the US House of Representatives Homeland Security Committee Hearing on Human Trafficking: Recent Trends*, 111th Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., March 19, 2009.

<sup>100</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Human Trafficking: A Strategic Framework Could Help Enhance the Interagency Collaboration Needed to Effectively Combat Trafficking Crimes*, (Washington, DC, 2007).

<sup>101</sup> President, National Security Presidential Directive 22, (December 16, 2002).

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

Therefore, there appeared to be a de-synchronized effort from individual agencies to best address HT within their capacity. The GAO report highlighted the need for a strategic framework that should include a common outcome, mutually reinforcing strategies, and compatible policies and procedures to operate across agency boundaries.<sup>103</sup> The report highlighted much of the positive efforts enacted by Government agencies, including the Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Because of the TVPA 2000, and its subsequent reauthorizations, the US Department of State was to lead the synchronization across all agencies. However, by 2007 there did not appear to have a unifying effort or guiding document akin to the National Security Strategy. The reauthorization of the TVPA in 2003 “established the Senior Policy Operating Group to address interagency policy, program, and planning issues regarding the TVPS’s implementation. In addition, the HSTC (Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center), collects and disseminates intelligence information to build a comprehensive picture of human trafficking.<sup>104</sup> Despite the HSTC’s organizational structure, its interagency composition is no guarantee for success. The HSTC charter points to the increased need for sharing of intelligence and the transition into appropriate law enforcement response.<sup>105</sup>

The annual TIP report serves to increase the awareness of various agencies and departments as they digest its subject matter, but it does not provide substantial guidance in the form of superior-subordinate directives to coordinate activity. The GAO report notes this deficiency,

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<sup>103</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Human Trafficking: A Strategic Framework Could Help Enhance the Interagency Collaboration Needed to Effectively Combat Trafficking Crimes*, (Washington, DC, 2007).

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>105</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center (HSTC) Charter and Amendments*, U.S. Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/m/ds/hstcenter/41444.htm> (Accessed May 13, 2010).

As we have illustrated in our work related to national strategies to combat terrorism, a government-wide outcome could hinge on an ideal “end-state” followed by a logical hierarchy of major goals, subordinate objectives, and specific activities to achieve results. Gathering intelligence on traffickers, dismantling trafficking rings...but at this time agencies have not collectively articulated what that outcome might be.<sup>106</sup>

As a critique of the GAO report, it did not attempt to include any DoD representation, through either interviews or analysis of potential roles. This oversight served in some ways as the catalyst to this monograph.

Increasing international and national awareness provides the fuel to address HT; however, there are difficulties in addressing HT. The most-clear difficulties in addressing HT stem from a lack of a legal/enforcement constructs, its social acceptance in some areas, the lack of cooperation between law enforcement officials, issues of national sovereignty, and the inability of law enforcement/security services to see the link between HT and organized crime and/or terrorism. The most damaging difficulty in addressing HT arises from national legal constructs to criminalize HT. At the international level, the UN, INTERPOL and other international organizations provide clear guidance for the illegal nature of HT; however, many nations that sign international agreements against HT do not have laws that criminalize HT within their borders. “For example, in some countries there is no legal framework against the trafficking of human beings, which reduces significantly the risks for the actors of black markets in prostitution and labor.”<sup>107</sup> An interesting phenomenon of HT, is that in some regions and localities, it may be seen as socially acceptable, further exacerbating the challenge of enforcing any statutory prohibitions on HT.<sup>108</sup> This social acceptance generally bleeds over into an embedded network

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<sup>106</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Human Trafficking: A Strategic Framework Could Help Enhance the Interagency Collaboration Needed to Effectively Combat Trafficking Crimes*, (Washington, DC, 2007), 26.

<sup>107</sup> Antonopoulos, 371.

<sup>108</sup> Tamara Makarenko, “Bodysnatchers” *Jane’s Policy Review Community*, January 25, 2008.



between communities, local and regional crime structures and complicit security forces that all have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo of HT.”<sup>109</sup>

The US Department of Defense’s attention on HT appears decidedly internal. The observation from some researches and cases highlighting the exploitation of women and bonded laborers by DoD contractors appears to guide DoD’s internal emphasis.<sup>110</sup> In the case of exploited women, there are cases where females are sexually exploited on or near US DoD facilities.<sup>111</sup> Most of the policies focus on the handling of contractors, the oversight of contractors both overseas and within the Continental US (CONUS). While the ability of the DoD to focus on HT is important, it misses a clear opportunity to address HT as a component activity that destabilizes a region.

As stated earlier, DoD does acknowledge HT as a security threat, and a human rights abuse, but appears to primarily focused on making sure that its internal processes and procedures do not contain any element of human trafficking. There appears to be a major opportunity to support the US Department of State’s lead in countering human trafficking by supporting a clear strategic framework that recognizes DoD’s role in stabilizing nations and regions by working by, through, and with partner nations.

Unlike multiple documents from the COCOM JIATFs that indicate significant cooperation for counter narco-terrorism and counter arms trafficking, only PACOM, EUCOM, AFRICOM, and SOUTHCOM appeared to have any documents that recognized HT as a

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<sup>109</sup> Louise Shelley, “The Unholy Trinity: Transnational Crime, Corruption, and Terrorism”, *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, 11, no.2 (2005): 102.

<sup>110</sup> Jerry Hansen, “Mobilizing our Forces for a Coordinated Attack on Human Trafficking: U.S. Department of Defense Plans for Combating Trafficking in Persons,” US Department of Defense, (lecture, Conference on Human Trafficking, Security Implications, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, March 8, 2005), 4.

<sup>111</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Office of the Inspector General Assessment of DoD efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons, Phase I, US Forces Korea*, Program Integrity Directorate Office of Deputy Inspector General for Investigations (Washington, DC, 2003).

component of illicit activities that affect its theater.<sup>112</sup> However, the actual actions conducted by the theater commands remained unclear, possibly due to their potential classification.

Despite HT's nature as a destabilizing activity that creates and exists in environmental conditions ripe for VEO exploitation, there does not appear to be a synchronized US Government operational approach. There also does not appear to be a synchronized operational approach from the US DoD and USSOCOM in particular, to address HT. This oversight appears to ignore the massive capability of DoD overseas, especially with regard to U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF).

## Effect on Stability

Through increased US and international pressure there has been significant increases in both awareness and prosecution of HT. However, as the 2010 Trafficking in Persons report highlights, the scope of law enforcement activity pales in comparison to the size and scope of the illicit activity. Strictly from a US perspective, there have been some positive effects garnered from the passage of the TVPA, as well as the annual Trafficking in Persons (TiP) Report. However, it is unclear whether there is a lasting effect on other nations akin to the results of a synchronized operational approach to counter narco-terrorism and arms trafficking. The national and global efforts to counter HT are an emerging response to this blight on human behavior; however, there remain many opportunities to improve the U.S. strategic and operational response. Due in part to the recent trends of national and international organizations to address HT, there

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<sup>112</sup> Senate Armed Services Committee, *Statement of General James L. Jones, USMC, Commander, United States European Command Before the Senate Armed Services Committee*, 109<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 2006, 6. U.S. Pacific Command, *USPACOM Strategy*, U.S. Pacific Command, [http://www.pacom.mil/web/pacom\\_resources/pdf/pacom%20strategy%2002APR09.pdf](http://www.pacom.mil/web/pacom_resources/pdf/pacom%20strategy%2002APR09.pdf) (accessed May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010). Senate Armed Services Committee, *Posture Statement of General Douglas M. Fraser, United States Air Force Commander, United States Southern Command*, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., Senate Armed Service Committee, 6,8,10. Senate Armed Services Committee, *Posture Statement of General William E. Ward, USA Commander, United States Africa Command*, U.S. Africa Command, <http://www.africom.mil/getArticle.asp?art=4133&lang=0> (Accessed May 12, 2010).

does not appear to be substantial, observable effects on stability and underlying environmental conditions through existing approaches.

## **Analysis Results**

When determining a methodology to support a claim that USSOCOM should augment existing US Government efforts to counter-HT, the MSSD outlined in Landman's text appears most applicable. Essentially, this methodology compared various similar features across three different illicit activities, identifying points of similarity and difference. Of particular relevance to this argument is the observation that all three illicit activities are similar in their nature as destabilizing activities and relation to underlying conditions that foment VEO existence and operations. However, unlike narco-terrorism and arms trafficking, there does not appear to be a clear synchronized approach countering human trafficking. From the lack of a clear synchronized operational approach, there appear to be negligible effects on national and regional stability. Therefore, there is a logical argument that a synchronized approach on HT should lead to positive effects on stability. While this observation appears intuitive, it remains challenging across all threats against the United States, but in particular against threats that have a strong human rights component.

Typically, the US DoD would not take the lead in illicit activities that violate human rights. In the case of HT, the US Department of State is the US Government lead when synchronizing counter-HT efforts. Despite USSOCOM's persistent presence in numerous overseas nations, particularly in a security force assistance training role, the US DoS synchronization does not appear to include DoD into its calculations to counter HT. There appears to be a missed opportunity to provide the necessary resources and focus to DoS's existing efforts through integration of the DoD, and particularly USSOCOM. Lousie Shelley, a researcher at the forefront of HT, makes the clear critique of existing operational approach: "The destabilizing nexus of transnational crime and terrorism has proved so intractable because policy-

makers continue to think about crime in terms of traditional paradigms...Neither community's (US and Europe) policy-makers are doing the integrative thinking that is required by this new challenge."<sup>113</sup> It is time for a new approach to counter the cancer of human trafficking, an approach that utilizes the right government agencies and departments with the correctly aligned capabilities, operating under a clearly synchronized operational approach.

## **Implications for USSOCOM/Operational Approach**

Using the analysis from the comparison of narco-terrorism, arms trafficking, and human trafficking, there appears to be a logical correlation between a synchronized approach and positive effects on stability. The challenge of government officials at the policy level is to match strategic demands with strategic and operational capabilities. USSOCOM proved over the last two decades to be extremely competent in both organizing and assisting a US Government and partner nations' synchronized operational approaches to address various illicit activities, including narco-terrorism and arms trafficking. It is also clear that USSOCOM's operational commitments have dramatically increased since 9/11; however, that should not mean that USSOCOM avoid potential threats and opportunities that appear to have correlated links to VEO existence and operations.

The United States has declared a war against terrorism. As national strategy is developed to counter the security threat of terrorism, it is imperative that the struggle be based not just on attacking the most visible manifestation of the program but the larger conditions with allow these groups to operate.<sup>114</sup>

Understanding that USSOCOM is the global synchronizer to counter VEOs, there exists a logical argument that using the indirect approach to address the underlying conditions for HT, while

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<sup>113</sup> Louise Shelley, "The Unholy Trinity: Transnational Crime, Corruption, and Terrorism", *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, 11, no.2(2005): 110.

<sup>114</sup> Louise I. Shelley, "The Nexus of Organized International Criminals and Terrorism," Transnational Crime and Corruption Center, <http://pagesperso-orange.fr/societe.internationale.de.criminologie/pdf/Intervention%20Shelley.pdf> (Accessed February 17, 2010).

remaining within the purview of USSOCOM. This monograph suggests that USSOCOM should expand its operational and intelligence synchronization support to existing US government counter-HT efforts. Particularly, USSOCOM may increase the partner nation HT-focused security through counter-HT TSCP events. USSOCOM proved to be highly effective synchronizers of information and intelligence, and therefore should provide that capability to the US Department of State HSTC. By suggesting these two operational changes, USSOCOM may have a greater positive effect on regional stability through the expanded indirect operational approach.

It is clear that while USSOCOM regularly employs the indirect operational approach, they do not apply this synchronized approach towards HT. The previous presidential administration stated that any approach should be in concert with partner nations that are willing to counter existing HT activities.<sup>115</sup> Under the banner of Theater Security Cooperation Programs, USSOCOM provides a critical link between the US Government and various foreign states' efforts to address the nebulous extremist threats from Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs). In addition to training, Special Operations Forces (SOF) operators are able to form lasting relationships with the leaders of the states' security forces, who often provide critical and timely information on illicit activities within the borders of that state, related to VEOs. SOF operators train foreign security forces that address indigenous problems of narco-terrorism, the nexus between narco- trafficking and terrorist organizations, or VEOs.<sup>116</sup> The changes suggested in this monograph are not a dramatic departure from USSOCOM's existing operations. USSOCOM's existing counter-narco terrorism operations form a good model for future counter-HT operations,

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<sup>115</sup> George W. Bush, "Remarks on Human Trafficking" (public remarks, Tampa Florida, July 16, 2004) [http://www.cfr.org/publications/7197/remarks\\_on\\_human\\_trafficking.html](http://www.cfr.org/publications/7197/remarks_on_human_trafficking.html) (Accessed August 2, 2010).

<sup>116</sup> U.S. Southern Command, "Counterdrug/Counter Narco Terrorism". U.S. Southern Command, <http://www.southcom.mil/appssc/pages/counternarco.php>. Senate Armed Services Committee, *Statement of the Commander Admiral Robert F. Willard, U.S. Navy, Commander, US Pacific Command before the Senate Armed Services Committee on US Pacific Command Posture, March 24, 2010*, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 2010.

stemming from a common recognition that local and national law enforcement capability serves as the backbone for effective counter-HT.

## **CNT Missions as a Model for Counter HT within the Comprehensive Approach**

Existing CNT missions provide a vehicle for SOF training, as well as opportunities to build partner nation capacity to address NT organizations and activities. The interrelationships between the SOF organization conducting the training and the various indigenous law enforcement and military units receiving the training provide a unique environment for collaboration and cooperation. CNT missions exist because of the nexus between organized crime and VEOs, as discussed earlier. Not surprisingly, CNT missions occur in the regions where the preponderance of HT occurs, particularly in SOUTHCOM, PACOM, and EUCOM's AOR. Repeatedly demonstrated by numerous successful CNT missions, SOCOM operations provide the gateway to developing that host nation capacity to address its own threats.

Similar to existing CNT indirect operational approaches, opportunities exist to train, advise, and develop national CHT strike forces, whose design and purpose is to collect information on, disassemble HT organizations, and prosecute offenders. While the US cannot force nations to pass their own legislation to prosecute HT offenders, the increased presence of SOF to train CHT forces creates an operational pressure where the nation state most likely will have to support CHT with respective laws. Without the law enforcement capacity to “prevent”, “prosecute”, and “protect” (the US 3P approach),<sup>117</sup> the nation remains impotent to address the destabilizing HT activities. At least one scholar recognizes the necessity of a synchronized indirect operational approach, even those unfamiliar with existing CNT efforts. As one author describes, “Human trafficking is the responsibility of numerous agencies, not just law

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<sup>117</sup> US Department of State, *2010 Trafficking In Persons Report* (Washington, DC, 2010):

enforcement. To combat it, coordination and collaboration is essential between those responsible for tourism, aid policy, foreign relations, and foreign military operations.”<sup>118</sup>

Experts that spend numerous hours investigating and prosecuting HT recognize the crucial nature of capable law enforcement as part of a larger synchronized operational approach. Gary Haugen, chairman of the NGO International Justice Mission, whose charter is to seek out and legally defend the rights of trafficking victims throughout the globe provides particular insight into effective practices that should combat human trafficking. Particularly, he notes the necessity for hands-on law enforcement training – training that is currently being conducted by SOF personnel throughout the world respective to counter-narco-terrorism. In his congressional testimony, he states that:

I would just say that the training part can actually be very effectively done, as long as it is done in a very hands-on way, not where you have a conference in a hotel for a day and a half and put up some Powerpoint presentations, because that is not the way anybody in effective law enforcement gets trained. You get trained out in the field, walking them through the process of investigation, of arrest, of proper prosecutions and that can be done.<sup>119</sup>

His observation resonates because it is remarkably akin to most of the TSCP missions performed by SOF throughout the globe. USSOCOM and the TSOCs that operationalize the indirect approach recognize the immediate benefit of hand-on tactical training for security forces. He later emphasizes in his testimony that fundamentally, “programs are needed to support special anti-trafficking police units...the answer must always be a committed struggle for *better* law enforcement...targeted programs that strengthen counter-trafficking activities of specialized police and prosecution units.”<sup>120</sup> USSOCOM is uniquely organized and equipped to perform this essential function as part of a larger strategic framework to counter-HT. Currently, the

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<sup>118</sup> Tamara Makarenko, “Bodysnatchers” *Jane’s Policy Review Community*, January 25, 2008.

<sup>119</sup> House Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Human Rights, *Gary Haugen, Statement at the Global Trends in Trafficking and the ‘Trafficking in Persons Report*, 108<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., June 25, 2003.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

coordination and synchronization provided by the US DoS does not provide the guidance or strategy that addresses HT in concert with other illicit activities, particularly ones that destabilize regions and create conditions ripe for VEO exploitation.

USSOCOM, through the Theater Special Operations Commands, provide critical training to security forces throughout the globe to address CNT. This assistance relates to an argument that narco-terrorism exists and is a threat to national security. This monograph demonstrates that HT also exists as a national security risk, primarily by its amalgamation with other illicit activities that destabilizes regions. Given the success of USSOCOM with existing CNT operations, future C-HT operations may model the CNT operational framework. The resulting increased capability of indigenous security forces to address human trafficking should have a positive effect on national and regional stability, in concert with USSOCOM's larger efforts to counter VEOs globally.

## **Intelligence and Information Synchronization at DoS's HSTC**

Since 9/11, USSOCOM has exemplified the intelligence/information synchronization required for effective support operations to counter global terrorism/VEOs. Whether at the tactical level in a particular theater or at the COCOM level of authority with a standing JIATF, USSOCOM serves to integrate intelligence/information across both joint and interagency partners. This monograph suggests that USSOCOM provide the DoS HSTC with that synchronization capability, in order to increase the collaboration between HT focused intelligence/information and the larger intelligence pool that focuses on countering VEOs. This would provide the direct link between emerging counter HT training missions, their classified operational reviews, and any updated information/intelligence. In addition, this presence supports the GAO's proposed strategic framework, which remarkably does not include DoD. Over the past few years, there has been remarkable progress on inter-agency cooperation and synchronization by conducting counter-terrorism, security force assistance, and counter



narco-terrorism operations. SOCOM should take this opportunity to build on these models a counter HT approach.

Over the last two decades, USSOCOM proved to be an outstanding interagency leader and synchronizer, especially with respect to intelligence and information synchronization. LTG Fridovich clearly states the implications for USSOCOM as an interagency synchronizer:

The vital nature of information sharing goes beyond the US Government to include coalition and partner nations where, in some cases, counter-terrorism is of less interest, countering narcotics trafficking, human trafficking, or even prosecuting tax evasion however are of great interest. In support of our law enforcement counterparts, we aid partner nations in making such charges, primarily through the exchange of intelligence and analytical expertise.<sup>121</sup>

The US Department of State HSTC serves as the hub of information and intelligence sharing relative to HT. HSTC intelligence synchronization capabilities appear to be limited, and outside of other existing intelligence fusion centers, such as DHS fusion centers and the National Counter-Terrorism Center. This limited capability and disjointed nature to other intelligence fusion centers creates an initial perception that HT is a separate illicit activity, unrelated to other destabilizing activities. As demonstrated in this monograph, HT is one of many destabilizing activities that both creates and exists in environmental conditions that serve VEO existence and operations. Given that demonstrated linkage, USSOCOM should provide an intelligence/information synchronization cell that ties existing HT intelligence with existing VEO intelligence.

The 2007 GAO report specifically highlighted shortcomings with respect to intelligence sharing. With information from traditional intelligence sources being limited, agencies could work toward achieving their goal of tracking trafficking patterns and dismantling trafficking organizations by establishing collaborative practices to obtain needed information to support

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<sup>121</sup> David P. Fridovich, speaking for USSOCOM's role in inter-agency cooperation, on March 11, 2009, to the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats, and Capabilities, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess.

proactive investigations of trafficking crimes.<sup>122</sup> As many US Government agencies learned over the past decade, stove-piped intelligence combined to a specific field potentially removes the opportunity to determine essential linkages between VEOs and illicit activities.

Currently, the US is already doing many great things to address HT, including some HT-focused intelligence coordination; however, there are areas relevant to information and intelligence about HT/VEO networks that form a natural coordination point for whole of government response.

Related to the previous discussion on USSOCOM's persistent presence throughout the globe, FBI and Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials felt they needed to pursue information about trafficking organizations back to their country of origin, identify trafficking patterns in order to enhance efforts to dismantle trafficking organizations. However, as the GAO report highlights,

HSTC officials told us [the FBI and ICE officials] that the intelligence community is not collecting as much information on trafficking as it is on other issues, such as human smuggling. HSTC officials also said that if HSTC could increase its analytical capability, it would be able to expand its current collection and dissemination of intelligence information on trafficking to develop more products and in so doing provide a more valuable resource to law enforcement and the intelligence community...<sup>123</sup>

There exists a critical opportunity for an organization seasoned in intelligence synchronization to augment existing HT focused intelligence and information sharing.<sup>124</sup> Among the US government organizations, USSOCOM remains the standard-bearer for joint/interagency intelligence synchronization.

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<sup>122</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Human Trafficking: A Strategic Framework Could Help Enhance the Interagency Collaboration Needed to Effectively Combat Trafficking Crimes*, (Washington, DC, 2007), 25.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 6

## **Conclusion**

From a military perspective, it would be easy to view HT as a human rights issue that does not fall into the existing missions of SOCOM. However, the DoS, Congress, the GAO, and other scholars bluntly describe HT as a national security threat that destabilizes nation states and regions. SOCOM has an opportunity to address national security issues and remove regional destabilizing activities by addressing HT. “De oppresso liber”, the motto of US Army Special Forces, generally translates as “free the oppressed”. There is no more oppressed group of people than those living a life of involuntary servitude, the victims of HT. United States military institutions exist in the delicate balance between democratic ideals and national interests. To say that the military only acts in response to explicit national interests is to ignore underlying ideas that motivate operations. SOF operators in particular, find themselves interacting with oppressed peoples throughout the world, often in the cloak of secrecy. At the tactical application of the SOF, these operators represent not just the interests of the US, but its ideals. As increasing scholarly literature and U.S. government resources are allocated to address the global virus of HT, SOCOM is presented with an opportunity to stand with other US agencies and departments to secure unstable areas, thereby increasing the United States’ national security.

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